

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
*Protecting You and Your Environment*  
*Bedford County Health Department*  
600 Bedford Avenue  
Bedford, VA 24523  
Phone: (540) 586-7952  
Fax: (540) 586-7991

31 July 2012

Dear Bedford City Resident,

On July 19, 2012 the Bedford County Health Department collected a fox from the Ridge Street/Maybeury Street area of the City of Bedford. The fox was tested and found to have rabies. We are sending this letter to inform you that rabies is present in wildlife throughout Virginia, and that a case of rabies has been confirmed in your area.

Rabies is a virus that attacks the brain and central nervous system. It is transmitted from animal to animal and from animal to human through the saliva of an infected animal. The saliva is usually transferred by bites and /or scratches. The rabies virus can be introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in skin, or onto mucous membranes by saliva or central nervous system tissues of the infected animal. If left untreated, rabies is fatal. Post-exposure treatment for humans must be administered prior to the appearance of any symptoms.

We ask that you review your pet's vaccination history. If your pet is not vaccinated, or has an expired rabies vaccination, you should immediately have any dogs, cats, and ferrets properly vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian. By having pets vaccinated, it will help protect your pet and your family from being exposed to the rabies virus. Section § 3.2-6521.A of the *Code of Virginia* mandates that the owner or custodian of any dogs and/or cats four months of age and older to have the animal currently vaccinated for rabies.

While not required, owners of livestock may wish to consult with a veterinarian about the possibility of rabies vaccinations for cattle, horses, sheep and other livestock.

In order to protect your family and pets from rabies, remember to:

- **Vaccinate** dogs and cats against rabies.
- **Report all animal bites** to your physician, the Local Health Department or Animal Control Office
- **Stay away from stray or wild animals.** These animals are generally not protected against rabies and may bite without warning.

Please contact the Bedford County Health Department if you should have any questions or concerns regarding rabies.

Sincerely:

Todd Fowler  
Environmental Health Supervisor  
Bedford County Health Department